

Gwen Jones

3105 Maranatha Lane
Springfield, MO 65803
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Dear Marjorie,

I should begin with a sincere apology for delaying so long in responding to your E-mail received more than a month ago. My excuse is that this caught me in the midst of selling my home of more than 25 years and moving to an apartment in Maranatha Village, the Assemblies of God retirement facility. The move involved downsizing and many adjustments. But I am convinced it was the right thing to do considering my age and the fact that most of my family live on the northwest coast.

First, let me say it was a joy to hear from you after so many years and brought back happy memories of the year when we were able to work together at Headquarters. The college had good judgment in asking you to write the history of NBC, a much-needed project.

Since I came to Maranatha, a neighbor with whom I worked many years ago asked if she could interview me to fill an assignment for a writing group Bob Cunningham started at the Village several years ago. When the interview was completed, she submitted it to Wayne Warner, A/G archivist. In conversation with me today, Wayne said he has no objection to me sharing a copy of the interview with you. He is not sure how he plans to use this memorial other than including it in the Archives. He may prepare something in article form. I presume your use of this would be to excerpt material related to the college. If you do have a question, feel free to contact Wayne.

The paragraph marked on page 2 outlines my activities at NBI. Actually I was editor-in-chief of the Yearbook in my graduate year. As you have probably observed, we had a nautical theme. I remember some fun experiences, such as the afternoon Bob Tangen took several of us in his old jalopy down on the waterfront. We crossed a rickety gangplank to find an old eccentric photographer who finally loaned us without charge some of the pictures that added to the distinctiveness of our yearbook.

As to music, I remember with appreciation my association with Delbert Cox who was our choral director. One incident about which we had a good laugh was the time he took the choir to perform in a local high school. On the last number the choir began to flat. Finding that trying to pull them up to pitch didn't work, I followed them down and ended up in a different key. No one but Professor Cox and I knew the difference!

Another incident (not for publication) happened on a Saturday when Professor Cox scheduled some recording at a studio on the top floor of a downtown building. He had

been waiting for me to recover from a leg injury. On arrival we found the elevator didn't operate on Saturdays, so he carried me up the many flights.

Directly answering your question as to the influence NBI had on my life, now at age 88 I look back with thankfulness for those three years when God began to focus my life on the two areas in which I would be able to serve—journalism and music.

I have never kept a diary, and at this time of life, my memory is maverick, but I cannot recall that we as students had much theological discussion about attitudes toward education. We were most concerned about serving the Lord. As you know, Henry Ness was an authoritarian. There were several typed pages of rules and regulations. One was that students should not have visitors of the opposite sex in their homes or dormitories. Living at home in a parsonage where my father was boarding a male student to help him through school, I wondered about keeping this rule so had to receive a special dispensation from Dr. Ness.

The ladies wore uniforms—navy blue dresses with starched white collars. I remember one morning arriving almost late for chapel and running down the aisle to get to the piano when the fastener came loose and my starched collar flew off in the aisle behind me!

One of the joyful remembrances of NBI to me is the broad outreach program, even in those early days. We were kept busy, and in demand, helping at area churches and visiting outstations. Any student who had access to a car was in demand to provide transportation.

My specific memories of faculty are rather few. Dr. Ness was one of a kind, but we admired him and gladly followed his leadership. In some previous context, he had seen a graduate recite from memory the Sermon on the Mount, and it was his dream to have this repeated at NBI—so the lot fell on me. I memorized the 5th, 6th, and 7th chapters of Matthew and recited them at Commencement with my closed Bible on the pulpit. I can still remember those presbyters sitting in the front row with their open Bibles checking every word!

I knew Brother Beatty as an outstanding Bible teacher, but one with a delightful sense of humor.

Memory plays funny tricks, doesn't it? Of all the great things that can be said about Brother Bronson, my most vivid memory was an unusually hot day in Seattle when the classroom became very warm. One of the students interrupted to ask, "Brother Bronson, can the window be opened?" "Sure it can," responded Brother Bronson, and continued teaching without missing a beat. After about a minute he asked the student, "Did you want me to open the window?" A lesson in clarity of speech.

As to my career at the Assemblies of God Headquarters, I think this is covered in the interview. It probably gives a lot more information than you'll ever want to know—but you can pull out what is of interest.

If anything in this letter triggers further questions, feel free to contact me further.

Since moving, I have had computer troubles. Last week I tried to send you an E-mail but it bounced back as "unknown." So until the bugs are worked out of the equipment, I prefer to use postal mail.

Again, sincere apologies for the delay.

Love,

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